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ABSTRACT

This paper examines federal requirements which promote parent involvement in day care, particularly in services for children under 3 years of age. The rationale for parent participation in poverty programs for children is discussed from three perspectives--political, economic, and socio-psychological--and Project Head Start's application of this rationale to poverty program guidelines is described. The basis for parent participation in day care for children of all socioeconomic backgrounds is delineated in terms of the role of the parent as guardian, as consumer, and as citizen. Also discussed are the physical vulnerability of the infant, the development of social attachments, and the influence of early experiences on the child's subsequent development as they affect parent participation in infant day care. The 1968 Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements (FIDCR) statement on parent participation is examined and two alternatives to the 1968 statement, based on a 1972 proposed revision of the FIDCR, are suggested. One alternative deals with regulations at a national level regarding collaboration between parent and institution, and parent participation at a city level. Recommendations for new federal requirements are presented. (CM)

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Infant Day Care and the Family:

Regulatory Strategies to Ensure Parent Participation

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The Merrill-Palmer Institute

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I. A National Response to Social Change

In America we are beginning to talk about children in a new way. The new language appears when reformers claim that we are not a "child-oriented society." It appears when we ask, "Who's minding the children?" Increasingly, reference to children in a personal, individual particular sense is being replaced by reference to children in a generic, class sense. The semantic shift parallels a profound change in the childrearing practices and life styles of American families. As more and more mothers join the labor force (almost 5 million who have children under 6 years-of-age), children in increasing numbers are spending major portions of the early years outside their own homes away from their own parents. The social significance of this change is that children are being reared (at least partially) outside the social system evolved by mankind slowly over countless spans of time as the primary cultural expression of the protected personalized and private world of "my child." We also know, though, that the human community has a seemingly unbounded capacity to accommodate to a bewildering array of physical and social conditions, that family systems coordinate with other systems in diverse ways. As a child care and rearing moves from the privacy and authority of the family to other, secondary institutions, children become a special group of public persons whose dependent status will eventually be replaced by an adult status as citizens. As such, it is necessary to ensure that child care outside the home serves the public interest. In a sense the expression "the children"

acknowledges an acceptance of public responsibility for developing accomodations to the special strains of contemporary social and economic conditions upon primary social institutions. The Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements (FIDCR) translates that felt responsibility in a framework for public policy.

It should be noted that almost 6 million children under 6 years-of-age are involved, and that of these, approximately 2.5 million are infants. Between 1961 and 1973, the labor force participation of married mothers with children under 3 years-of-age increased from 15.3 percent to 29.4 percent. More significantly, a major part of the increase occurred in families where the husband earned over $5,000 a year. In families where the husband earned over $10,000 a year, maternal employment increased from 10 percent to 27 percent (Levitan & Alderman, 1975).

We may speculate why women with children are entering the work force and we may also consider the economic and social implications of their doing so (cf. Young & Nelson, 1973; Schultz, 1973; Nelson & Krashinsky, 1971). Regardless of point of view, most analysts do not expect the level of maternal employment to diminish substantially, although high levels of unemployment will undoubtedly influence the patterning of child care arrangements. The point at issue is that the question of surrogate child-care touches the interests of American families across all socio-economic levels.

In the present paper we undertake the task of examining federally mandated requirements which promote parent involvement in day care, especially in those services targeted for children under 3 years-of-age. In order to understand the parent involvement provisions of the Federal Interagency Day

Care Requirements approved in 1968 by the Department of HEW, Labor and the Office of Economic Opportunity it is necessary to consider the general regulatory design that is being proposed

The FIDCR document provides for the first time a public statement of mandatory criteria governing the use of federal funds for the care of children in facilities outside their own homes. Why is such a statement necessary? We searched the document for an explicit statement of purpose but could find none. The text, however, suggests that the statement encompasses two concerns:

1. To protect the physical and psychological well-being of young children who receive care outside their own homes in the absence of their parents or legally designated guardians. Physical well-being refers to the child's bodily health and safety--his access to an adequate diet, to medical care, to protection from unnecessary exposure to illness or physical danger. Psychological well-being refers to the child's mental health and safety--his access to intellectual resources, humane treatment, affectionate and sensitive care by mature and responsible adults.

2. To protect the public from misrepresentation and abusive practices. At least some part of the requirements attempts to ensure that federal funds are properly applied to purposes for which they were allocated, and that existing laws governing fair labor practices, discrimination, the protection of persons in public places and others are honored in the process.

Although these two purposes - to protect the child and the public - are interwoven, they represent distinctly different perspectives and problems.

With respect to the second purpose, consider the function of laws _

designed to protect the public and regulate the use of federal funds. For example, if parents are to choose wisely who is to care for their children, they must have easy access to accurate information. At a minimum, this would mean that all agencies and programs serving children would be required to follow honest advertising practices, to file with public information systems quality indicator data, and to make accounts and other institutional workings open to public scrutiny upon request. Involved would be a careful mandated application and extension of "right to know" laws to child care services from operating facilities to federal agencies. The basis of such regulations would be a view of the parent as citizen.

With respect to the first purpose, a somewhat different perspective is required. In America today we find ourselves in an unprecedented situation which has built up over a 20-year period. Although parents for the most part continue to be the guardians of children (in fact and legally) increasing numbers of children under 6 years-of-age spend some part of the day in the care of persons other than their parents.* In other words, large numbers of dependent and vulnerable children are in a twilight zone between the family and a publicly monitored institution (e.g. the public school), and as such become appropriate subjects of public concern. In addition, federal funds contributed directly (e.g. Head Start) or indirectly (e.g. tax benefits) to such support in estimated amounts

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*If we consider the young children of working mothers, children in private and public educational settings (excluding public kindergartens), and those in specialized institutions (hospitals, institutions for handicapped children, camps and so forth), the total group might exceed 10 million children, well over 50 percent of children under 6 years-of-age.

ranging between $520 million and $650 million in 1970, increasing to a possible $1 billion in 1973 (Larsen, 1975). The basis of regulations serving this purpose would be a view of the child as future citizen.

Protection of the child poses two unavoidable questions. One, which constitutes the background charge of the present concept paper, asks how we can best ensure that public funds do not support activities which endanger or harm children. The second question reflects the first, but implies a different process: How can we, as a matter of national policy, best ensure the protection and well-being of children regardless of the financial involvement of government? Although FIDCR applies to the use of Federal monies, requirements developed at the Federal level can come to be guidelines for others, especially for parents who must make decisions regarding how their children are to be served. It is also necessary to bear in mind as we evaluate the FIDCR, that much ambiguity surrounds the rights of parents and children involved in surrogate child-care arrangements. For example, regarding the protection of children there is no national policy on the use of corporal punishment in surrogate care situations. Regarding the well-being of children, we have no national policy which would guarantee each child the minimum daily requirements of protein, vitamins and minerals. On the other hand, there is legislation such as the Child Protection Act of 1966 which applies regardless of the involvement of Federal funds. At the very least, the FIDCR must incorporate existing protective legislation. A greater goal would be to extend and, when necessary, define additional protective principles which could eventually apply to all children in day care situations.

The 1968 Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements bravely attempt to clarify the public responsibility for the care and protection of children outside their own homes. In so doing a significant section mandates the participation of parents on advisory councils. It should be recognized that, as formulated in 1968, participation operates within some restricting conditions.

We referred to one such restricting condition earlier. The requirements apply only when Federal funds enter directly into the provision of services. The many indirect sources of Federal support are ignored, such as tax exempt status, tax credits or deductions. Recent figures released by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare indicate that in FY 1974-1975, the Federal contribution in the form of child care deductions amounted to almost $209 million (Larsen, 1975). One question, then, pertains to the government's role in supporting parent participation when child care is provided by friends and neighbors in informal, unlicensed settings.

A second restricting condition is structural. The 1968 statement assigns implementation of the requirements to "administering agencies." Unfortunately, rules governing the designation of such agencies are not offered, thereby leaving the core of accountability unspecified. What competencies must an administering agency satisfy if it is to distribute and monitor day care funds? If it is important to monitor child care workers, should we neglect to monitor higher level public or private agencies? The monitoring of administering and regulating agencies concerned with the provision of human services is a persisting, unsolved problem of considerable importance.

The problem which any set of requirements must face is that in the

chaos of Federal funding sources for day care (from the Department of Agriculture's milk program to ACTION's allocation of $34 million to foster grandparent programs), administering systems may be as much of a regulatory problem as the facilities which care for children. As originally conceived, parent and community participation was proposed for community action programs as a way of achieving program coordination at a local level in place of the more difficult task of achieving coordination at a Federal level (cf. MIDCO, 1972). The 1968 requirements reflect a stress on local management, as well as the diversity and uncertainty of administering systems. Unless decision-making agencies are carefully delineated their prerogatives clearly specified, and the policy bodies associated with these agencies explicitly described, parent participation in decision-making is unlikely to become a stable or useful feature of child care enterprises.

In the following sections we discuss the general concept of parent participation, how it has been applied to programs for young children, its special function in the care and protection of infants, and alternative formulations of federal requirements.

II. Parent Participation in Poverty Programs for Children

Some History

Parent participation has a long tradition in America*. Among the first nursery schools in America were parent cooperatives and even those who were not often mandated parent participation in some form as a prerequisite for the child's admission to the program (Swift, 1964; Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973). But by-and-large these facilities served middle-class families who wanted social and intellectual opportunities for their children or improved parenting skills for themselves. These schools did not serve the children of the poor nor did they care for the children of working mothers. Typically, the day nursery and more recently the day care center did not make systematic provisions for parent involvement. Of course, when day care was used by social welfare agencies to relieve family stress, parents were in some sense involved. And day care teachers often sought out the parents when children were having difficulty. More often than not, the parent was perceived as a source of the child's problem rather than as a participating member of the institution (Chilman, 1973; Sjølund, 1973; MIDCO, 1972; Lippitt, 1968; Steiner, 1966).

Beginning with the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the relations between parents and social institutions entered a new era of public regulation. At the core of the legislation was the community action program, defined as one

> . . . which is developed, conducted and administered with

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*Extensive historical analyses can be found in Sunley, 1955; Brim, 1959 and Schlossman, 1976. This material must be approached cautiously since primary sources are works by the affluent and literate.

> the maximum feasible participation for the residents of the areas and members of the groups served . . .*

What exactly did "maximum feasible participation" mean? Did it mean jobs, consultation or power? What were the community action programs supposed to do? As one critic put the question (Moynihan, 1968), were they supposed to "hire the poor, involve the poor, or be dominated by the poor?"

The Economic Opportunity Act provided the philosophy and funds for Head Start, the first large scale program for poor children. Not surprisingly, it had to solve the problem of legislative intention and it did so by touching bases with most of the possibilities. At first, the major emphasis was on the parent as learner, with jobs and ancillary programs designed to enhance and modify parents' child care skills. According to several reviews (cf MIDCO, 1972; Hess, Block, Costello, Knowles & Largay, 1971; Childman, 1973; Gordon, 1969), new notions emerged over time and were embodied in program practices. Parents were seen as connecting links between the program and the community, as a public relations group which could generate support for the program from the families it served as well as from the local political leadership. It was not until 1967, however, that the role of parent as decision-maker became clearly enunciated. The 1967 amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act held that

> Head Start . . . will provide for the direct participation of the parents of such children in the development, conduct and overall program direction at the local level.**

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*Section 202 (a) (3) of S. 2642

**Public Law 90-22, December 23, 1967, Part B, Section 222 (1) (B).

The Head Start manual was subsequently revised (August, 1970) to extend the objectives of parent participation. The new objectives included human development goals for the parents themselves and opportunities for parents to influence the program. By way of implementing these objectives, the term "advisory" was dropped from the description of committees and councils; at higher levels of decision-making parents were given veto power and elected to policy making bodies.

Some Justifications

The participation principle, mandated by Congress and rendered into operating guidelines by the executive, rapidly became a part of the image of early childhood programs developed to alleviate poverty. Its rationale, however, came from very different theoretical and philosophical positions which made it inevitable that the principle would become realized in different and, perhaps, incompatible ways. Since these positions have been discussed elsewhere in detail (MIDCO, 1972, Chilman, 1973; Harrell, 1972; Hess, Beckum, Knowles & Miller, 1971; Gordon, 1969; Greenberg, 1967), we will merely summarize them here under three main groupings: political, economic, and socio-psychological. Each position was able to call upon a body of social science literature to elaborate one or another aspect of what was often a broader philosophical world view.

Participation in the democratic process. The principle of participation is entirely consistent with the value system of a democratic society. That principle is incorporated into the Bill of Rights, and has been elaborated over time to prevent the systematic exclusion of persons from political, economic and educational activities. The civil rights movement of the late 1950's and early 1960's applied that principle to a panoply-

of visible and hidden injustices. In the process, the nation became sensitized as it perhaps had never been before to the subtle and devious ways in which citizens, especially the poor, are effectively blocked from participation in the major institutions of our society.

Quite unexpectedly, the spotlight landed on institutions to which the principle of participation did not ordinarily apply--hospitals, schools, and welfare agencies, institutions typically organized and administered by white middle-class professionals and dominated by the values and judgments of such professionals. Moreover, the white middle-class community exerted control over the policies of these institutions by their representation on boards and advisory councils. By contrast, the poor were disenfranchized. As a result, there was a discrepancy between the goals, values, and operations of institutions and the life circumstances of the poor which led to dysfunctional intervention and educational strategies (Cloward & Epstein, 1967). In addition, the programs developed by such institutions tended to be carried out in a paternalistic manner which highlighted the sense of competence and control of the professional and deepened the sense of failure and helplessness of the poor.

The themes became that of power and control in both the political and psychological sense. Politically, it was held that the poor must enter into the decision-making process to ensure that programs would respond to the needs and sensitivities of the group. Psychologically and more subtly, political participation would support "an assertive attempt to provide for their children protection against what they (the poor) regard as a noxious

social and political environment" (Hess, Beckum, Knowles & Miller, 1971). The apathy, self-contempt and hopelessness of poverty might be remedied if people had an opportunity to learn connections between their activities and social consequences (cf. Smith, 1968; Cottrell & Foote. 1955). It was especially important to enhance the competence--i.e., power and control--of parents. Parents were seen as the primary socializing agents of children. It was they who best knew what their children needed and who would provide those things were they able. If the confidence and ability of parents were enhanced, if parents learned, for example, how to plan, and how to implement plans, they would transfer these skills to the management of home and children. Presumably, experience in the democratic process--formulating problems and negotiationg solutions--would influence relationships in the home. Parental change would come about through the generalization of positive adult experience rather than through direct training in particular child-rearing skills.

Participation in the economy. Another strand which supported the idea of parent participation was concrete and practical. According to many analysts the central cause of social disadvantage was blocked access to economic resources. Although civil rights legislation and the courts might over time alleviate blocks imposed by discriminatory practices, other strategies were needed to alleviate the liabilities of inadequate skills and work know-how. In the spirit of time, it was reasonable to call for the participation of the poor as salaried workers in the anti-poverty projects themselves. The concept of career development and career

ladders spread rapidly in the area of human services which was expanding under Federal support (Chilman, 1973; Besaw, 1969).

The concept seemed especially appropriate to early childhood programs. First, it provided incentives and funds to train parents in child development and child care skills which might transfer to the home. Second, it provided an opportunity to create child care enterprises with personnel who were indigenous to the community, yet with skills and expectations consistant with those of professionals. The "paraprofessional," composit parent, poor and community representative, became an accepted staff member in a wide variety of programs for children; they functioned as classroom aides, parent educators, and community coordinators. According to one report, approximately one-third of the paid staff positions in Head Start were filled by parents and another third was filled by parent volunteers (Bates, 1972). The enterprise ultimately forced a reexamination of the skills and training needed to rear children, with a chain of associated implications: What (and who) is a child care professional? If indigenous people (parents) can acquire the skills needed to rear effective children, is there a need for elaborate training programs and costly preschool institutions? Exactly what must a person know and do in order to support and enhance the development of children? Special certification training programs (cf. Office of Child Development, Child Development Associate, 1973) were developed in response to the uncertainties of definitions and boundaries.

These questions became crucial with the passage of the 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act which established the work incentive program (WIN). The legislation emphasized the employment of AFDC mothers, with provisions for training, counseling, placement, and day care. At the

present time, there is little evidence that the program was successful.* Developing marketable skills and stable employment for mothers who did not do well in school settings, who were responsible for maintaining a home and caring for children proved to be no simple task. Moreover, the program required the creation of surrogate care situations, which again posed the problem of standards and how such standards were to be met. The WIN program actually ran counter to the parent participation tide by separating parent from child for substantial parts of the day under circumstances which made it difficult for the mother to maintain any but the most superficial contact with the child care situation.

Participation in a learning experience. The third major strand of parent participation stressed two issues. The first was that the family is and will continue to be the major socializing and protecting agency for young children. The second was that if a preschool program is to benefit the child over the long term, opportunities offered to the child must be sustained at home.

Clearly, the notion of the parent as a learner who with help can create a more beneficial home environment for the child implies that the parent lacks skills or competencies in areas pertaining to the development of children. In fact, a rather large research literature seemed to document social class differences in how children are reared, differences which were assumed to be linked to the difficulties poor children face in acquiring the skills needed to obtain political power or gain access to employment

*The percentage of employed AFDC mothers was 14.3 percent in 1961 and only 16.2 percent in 1973 (Levitan & Alderman, 1975).

opportunities (Bayley & Schaefer, 1960; Garfield & Helper, 1962; Hess & Shipman, 1965; Scheinfeld, Bowles, Tuck & Gold, 197; White, 1957; Deutsch, 1973).

Although several commentators (cf. Hess, Block, Costello, Knowles & Largay, 1971; HIDCO, 1972) have stressed the difference between "social-structure" and "deficit" models of social change, the distinction seems to end in circularity. The distinction was useful to sensitize middle-class professionals and researchers to the intrusion of cultural class values into their work and to an alternative position which stresses the capacity of human beings to adapt to life circumstances. However, successful adaptation to poverty may not entail the skills needed to participate effectively in the mainstream activities of a "middle-class" society. The problem underlying political, economic, and socio-psychological participation was consistently a question of legitimate opportunity and commensurate skill.

Programmatic Provisions

Head Start, more than any other poverty program for young children, translated the various justifications for parent participation into detailed program guidelines. These guidelines were in accord with the more general notion of child-rearing as occurring in a "socialization community." For example, Lippitt (1968) suggested that such a community could be characterized by two primary forms of collaboration and coordination. Vertical collaboration is that which occurs within an institution; it is represented by communication and planning across hierarchically organized levels of decision-making responsibility and authority (e.g. the relationship between federal and state agencies, a local governing board, executive director,

staff, and children). In contrast, horizontal collaboration refers to collaboration between institutions (family and school, parent and teacher).

Vertical collaboration. As we indicated earlier, by 1970 Head Start policies began to stress parent participation in decision-making functions. The parent involvement workbook issued in 1969* offered a formula for parent participation at all operational levels: (a) at the classroom level, there was to be a parent committee composed entirely of parents; (b) at the center level, there was to be an advisory committee of whom no less than 50 percent were to be parents; (c) and (d) at the delegate agency and at the grantee level, parent representation was to be no less than 50 percent. Moreover, parents were to be elected to committee slots.

In the 1970 revision of the Head Start Manual,** the role of parents was further strengthened. At the center level, the committee was to be made up entirely of parents; at other levels, parents were given veto power; the word advisory was dropped and committees and councils became policy bodies. By 1970, Head Start policy committees were empowered to deal with the following functions: goals, location of centers, use of community resources, recruitment of children, the composition and selection of the policy group, services delegated to Head Start by the Delegate Agency, personnel policies, hiring and firing the delegate agency's Head Start director, requests for funds and programs, budget and information.

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*Parent Involvement: A workbook of training tips for Head Start Staff, 1969.

**Instruction I-30, Section B2, 8/10/70.

The councils were also to be consulted in identifying children's needs and in ensuring that standards (space, equipment) were met.

It is evident that the organizational structure introduced under parent participation provisions represented intra-institutional collaboration only in the special sense that it gave the children through their guardians a voice in the power structure. To the extent that staff at all levels of operation were not systematically included, it did not address the more general problem of integrating roles and functions within the institution by admitting into the decision-making process those who must translate policy into daily happenings.

Unfortunately, there is relatively little evidence regarding whether and in what ways the recommendations formulated in the manual were actually met. As measured by positions on boards and committees, and attendance at meetings, parent participation was extensive, far more extensive than in centers not funded under Federal guidelines (Westinghouse Learning Corporation, 1972). The Kirschner survey (1970) suggests a relation between parental participation in Head Start and parent interest in other community activities associated with the welfare of children. Informal descriptive accounts by professionals tend to stress parents' inexperience and the role of the agency in guiding, training and containing parent activities (e.g. Auerbach, 1975). As yet there is no data on how parental participation in decision-making bodies influenced the quality of programs or the home lives of children (Chapman & Lazar, 1971; Stearns, 1971; MIDCO, 1972). There is some evidence that parent participation in elementary school programs was positively associated with a number of quality indicators and with child gains (White, et al., 1973).

Horizontal collaboration. Among Head Start's programmatic standards was a heavy stress upon the ongoing exchange between parents and staff. The 1967 Head Start Policies Manual states that there are at least four major areas of parent participation in Head Start. Three of these provide opportunities for ongoing contact between parents and staff: (a) participation in the classroom as paid employees, volunteers or observers; (b) educational activities for the parents which they have helped to develop; and (c) welcoming center staffs into their homes for discussions of the ways in which a parent can contribute to the child's development at home.

One criticism of the horizontal concept as carried out in Head Start was that the exchange was one way, from "expert" to the less capable parent (Gordon, 1969; Hess, et al., 1971). Later the notion of "partnership" and reciprocal exchange began to emerge, especially in programs explicitly designed to modify parenting skills (Weikart & Lambie, 1969; Weikart, 1971; Kessen & Fein, 1975). In depth discussions of parent training programs can be found elsewhere and will not be discussed here (cf. Gordon, 1969a, 1969b, 1970; Kirschner Associates, 1970; M. Robinson, et al., 1973; Chilman, 1973; White, et al., 1973; Goodson and Hess, 1977). A recent examination of 28 intervention programs designed to train parents to teach school related skills to their children concludes that nearly all the programs produced immediate and long term gains (Goodson and Hess, 1977).

For the most part, horizontal involvement attracted far more evaluative research attempts than did vertical involvement. Although Head Start efforts were not always what they could have been (Payne, Mercer, Payne & Davison, 1973), the current consensus seems to be that

1. The more intensive the involvement, the more noticeable the difference in child performance (Stearns, 1971; M. Robinson, et al., 1973; Bronfenbrenner, 1973). Home-based parent education

programs which involve a close relation between the parent and a program representative is more effective than parent discussion groups; there is also some evidence that attendance at parent activities is associated with the magnitude of children's IQ gains (Goodson and Hess, 1977).

2. The more the parent's self-perception is that of the primary educator of her child the stronger the effect she has on the child's intellectual development (Stearns, 1971; Bronfenbrenner, 1973).

3. Although parent employment as a child care worker seems to have beneficial effects on the intellectual development of their own children, little is known about the impact of such employment on the family constellation (Chapman & Lazar, 1971; Stearns, 1971).

4. Parent education programs designed for the parents of infants seem to produce benefits which are sustained after the program terminates (M. Robinson, et al., 1973).

In brief, reviewers have concluded that the most successful compensatory educational programs tended to have a strong parent focus, and a strong parent participation component. But, in addition, they had a clear sense of purpose and they displayed high levels of skill--managerial, interpersonal, and intellectual. One might surmise that the programs which best supported change were those that were able to modify institutional social structures enough to encourage the kind of parent participation which then enhanced parent confidence, skills, and the skills of children. What happened in these programs might be better represented by a circular feed-back system than the linear "causal" model so often used to evaluate program effects. Unfortunately, relatively few programs collected sufficient formative and parent behavior data to permit the appropriate analyses.*

*The research-based Parent Child Development Centers are an important exception. (cf M. Robinson, et al, 1973).

Policy recommendations which grew out of an extensive summary and analysis of Federal programs for children stressed the importance of the family as a focus of intervention, parents as the primary socializing agents of children, and parent involvement in policy and administrative decision-making (White, et al., 1973; Goldman & Lewis, 1976).

III. Parent Participation and Day Care

In the preceding section we reviewed the development of strategies for promoting parent involvement in programs designed to alleviate the impact of poverty on families and children. Our intention was to present how these strategies grew out of a central focus on poverty which at the time had widespread political support. The central focus of day care is vastly different although much of the direct Federal funding for day care comes about through funds for poverty programs.

The Day Care Population

A relatively small proportion of children in day care settings (under 10 percent) receive direct Federal support, yet the facilities which provide care for these children service children from all income brackets. The Westinghouse-Westat (1971) study of day care centers (which provide less than 8 percent of the total out-of-home care) indicates that about 60 percent of the centers were proprietary. Almost all of the income of these centers came from fees paid by parents, although these fees are often partially underwritten by public funds. Comparable information regarding family day care services is lacking. Approximately 90 percent of day care consists of unlicensed informal but potentially tax deductible home care arrangements. Although technically Federal funds cannot be used

in the direct purchase of care in settings which are not licensed, it is unlikely that individual purchase arrangements are well enough monitored to ensure compliance.

It has been estimated that in 1970 some 250,000 children were being provided at least some subsidy under federal programs which were funded at $222 million. It is plausible to suppose that when we shift from children to centers, federal funds touched a significant proportion of the 17,500 centers (proprietary and non-proprietary) identified in 1970, and possibly some proportion of family day care homes as well. Again, working backwards from centers to children, one might assume that a significant number of non-subsidized children were in those facilities.

Our point is that even though only a small proportion of the 2.1 million children of working mothers in out-of-home care receive direct public subsidies, a significantly large number of children and families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds would be touched by a parent participation system mandated by the FIDCR (depending, of course, on how participation opportunities are defined, how eligibility is determined, and the extent to which federal requirements serve as a widely respected standard of excellence).

The Basis of Parent Participation

The justification for parent participation in day care comes from several sources. In contrast to the justifications offered by poverty programs (parent change), primary emphasis in day care is upon program practices that respect and protect the responsibility of parents to rear children in a manner congruent with the public interest. With such an emphasis, the authority of the parent in the home is deliberately

extended so as to maintain their authority outside the home as well as their responsibility to the broader community. In a sense this requires expanding the notion of parent from the traditional notion of a particular parent of a particular child to a notion of "parent" as a class of adult persons (i.e. a constituency) who have a special relationship to a class of child persons. Two issues are associated with this distinction. First is the way adults as individuals function as the parents of a day care child on a day-to-day basis. Second, is the way parents as a group function as consumers and citizens to protect their own and others' children.

The parent as defacto guardian. As more mothers join the work force and as more children under 6 receive care in extra-family settings, the danger increases that the family as a primary child-rearing institution will be replaced by secondary institutions (Bronfenbrenner, 1970, 1972, 1975). Moreover, there is currently no guarantee that secondary institutions will be responsive to the public interest (Nelson & Krashinsky, 1971), that they will adequately protect children, or that they will honor the values and wishes of the families they serve (Steinfels, 1973).

A long tradition of human culture holds that children are to be reared within a personalized network of kin. When care is transferred out of the family, it is usually transferred to familiar and trusted others (such as in a kibbutz) in ways which maintain parental supervision through interpersonal relations or communally established participatory mechanisms. Both systems support the pivotal role of parents in managing the interface

between the family and extra-family institutions in all matters which concern the child.

Involved is the principle of parental guardianship along with procedures to sustain the guardianship when child care functions are delegated to non-family institutions. The fear that day care will erode family responsibility, that it will encourage parents to abandon their children is an old one in America (Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973) even though it is often the child care institutions (rather than the parents) who express attitudes which reject parents and encourage their detachment (cf. Prescott, 1965; H. Robinson, et al., 1973). By ensuring parent access at the personal level, the principle of guardianship is supported in daily practice.

Research pertaining to the daily, ongoing interactions between parents and caregivers is limited. The most extensive study in this area was recently reported by Powell (1977). When are parents and caregivers most likely to communicate with one another? Approximately 71 percent of the parents and 67 percent of the caregivers report that communication occurs when the parent leaves and picks up the child. The telephone, parent conferences, home visits, special parent programs are infrequently used modes. Similar findings are emerging from the National Day Care Cost Effects study (ABT Associates, 1977). Moreover, Powell reported that communication frequency was associated with the status of the caregiver: parents were more likely to talk with the center director than any other staff member. Parents and caregivers make a distinction between discussion of specific caregiver practices (e.g. how a child is disciplined on a given occasion) and discussion of goals and general expectations of the centers. Not

surprisingly in view of the tendency for parents to talk with high status persons, respondents are likely to view the latter as a more appropriate topic of conversation. Although relatively few parents actually participate in formal decision-making activities (according to preliminary data from the National Day Care study, only one percent of the parents interviewed report such participation), parents distinguish between general policy and individual child issues and express an interest in general policy matters when opportunities to do so are provided. The Powell study also noted that as communication frequency between parents and caregivers increases, the importance of staff members as primary sources of information about the child's well-being also increases. The process is undoubtedly a complex one - as parents pause to chat with caregivers they also have an opportunity to observe the classroom, their own and other children. In effect, the parent may gain several sources of information during these transitional periods.

The parent as informed consumer. It is well known that parents and caregivers often differ markedly in their values and expectations regarding the development of children (Sjølund, 1973; H. Robinson, et al., 1973). To the extent that a parent is informed about the alternatives as well as the policies and practices of a child care arrangement, the parent can protest, negotiate, or choose an alternative arrangement. The parent as an informed consumer can retain regulatory control over the "fit" between the family and the surrogate care arrangement.

When parents work on a full-time basis, the monitoring and negotiating function is difficult to sustain. Unfortunately, we know little about how parent-caregiver interactions develop, but the limited data indicates that some centers have policies which discourage such interaction. In

effect, parents are encouraged to drop their child and run. More alarming is the increasing tendency of centers to provide transportation for the child, which means that the parents of preschool children may have no regular contact with the day care setting. In many day care arrangements, the presence of the parent may have been almost entirely eliminated, psychologically as well as physically. The geographic location of the center with respect to the parent's home and workplace may also be an issue, although Powell (1977) failed to find a relationship between geographic variables and parent-caregiver communication.

Clearly, then, the service needs being met by a day care program might conflict with the need to maintain ongoing parental supervision and contact with a child care arrangement.

Contact, however, may not be enough. Ideally, the parent as consumer would be well informed about what is best for their child and astute enough to detect when that standard was being violated. The problem has been clearly posed by Nelson & Krashinsky (1971).

> In the traditional theory of consumer behavior the consumer is assumed to be expert at knowing what he likes--sweet juicy oranges--and the alternative goods and services are assumed to be displayed in a way that quality characteristics are evident as well as price.
>
> . . . But what if the appropriate conditions are not met? Even for oranges the consumer has little information as to whether they are picked early or late (which may effect their sweetness) or the extent to which color is influenced by dyes rather than sunlight, etc.
>
> . . . Since day care service is provided when the parent is not there, there is a severe problem of reliable display. How does a parent really know what kind of day care a child is getting at a day care center? (Nelson & Krashinsky, 1971, pp. 36-37).

Again, research pertaining to the role of parent as consumers is limited. Michelin guides for restaurants and hotels, consumer reports on cars and refrigerators have become accepted and popular devices for transmitting information to consumers; guides to child and family services could serve a similar purpose. A promising series of studies has recently been reported by Bradbard and Endsley (in press, a,b,c). These investigators have designed a guide to permit parents to rate the quality of a day care center. The guide, which lists specific characteristics of quality care, is emerging as a reliable and valid tool for consumer oriented assessment.

The parent as concerned citizen. One of the most alarming aspects of out-of-home care for young children is that parental unavailability and public apathy has combined to privatize a consumer service. Even when facilities have met licensing requirements, they need not permit professionals or interested citizens access to the premises (Keyserling, 1972), and, as we indicated earlier, parent access may be discouraged.

Of greater concern is that child care issues rarely become a matter of public debate or newspaper headlines. Whereas nursing home improprieties have been topics of intensive investigative reporting, equally outrageous malpractices in day care tend to be ignored. A case in point is the recent scandal in New York regarding 171 direct lease day care centers which yielded windfall profits for center landlords at a cost estimated at $19 million to the city (The Village Voice, June 14, 1976). Although the direct lease arrangement and the possibility of political collusion was

reported by the Bank Street Day Care Consultation Service six years earlier, there were no formal mechanisms through which the public interest could be protected. The problem is that in human service enterprises charged with the disbursal of public revenues there is a way of conducting business which encourages dubious if not downright corrupt practices.

The third basis of parent participation then would be to ensure access to the internal workings of such enterprises by citizens who have the most to lose from systematic abuse. Parents can serve an invaluable oversight function to ensure accountability in the use of public funds. Once again, evidence regarding parent roles on day care advisory committees is limited, consisting for the most part of loose, descriptive accounts of how such committees worked in particular agencies (e.g. Auerbach, 1975).

Data from the National Day Care Cost Effects study (Abt, 1977) indicates that only one percent of the parents interviewed participated in decision-making activities ranging from hiring staff to purchasing equipment. However, 81 percent considered parent participation in hiring the center director as an important aspect of day care. Clearly, parent participation in such activities is not currently an established day care practice. As a consequence, there is little practical experience to serve as a guide in determining how federal standards might best be implemented. The notion of "oversight" would need clarification and the relation between such bodies and child care agencies would need to be specified. If parent bodies are to function autonomously, they would require funds, staff supports and consultants.

IV. The Young Child: Protection and Development

In the previous sections we examined some general issues regarding the interface between the family and surrogate child care institutions. Essentially we considered the role of the parent as guardian, as consumer, and as citizen. Underlying these parental roles, the theme which gives them sustenance and focus, is the needs of young children as well as those physical and mental limitations which make children vulnerable to abuse. The issue becomes especially acute when we consider the needs and competencies of children under 3 years-of-age. Although the argument that the young child lacks resources with which to adequately protect himself, while at the same time being especially sensitive to depriving or debilitating circumstances, might be obvious enough, it nevertheless presents a crucial part of the case for parental contact, choice and oversight (cf. Provence & Lipton, 1962; Murphy, 1968).

The role of the parent as wise monitor and informed consumer does not receive much help from the young child. Children, even by the age of 3, are not adept enough with language to tell the parent what happened to them during the day. The two-year-old has just come to manage simple sentences, and the one-year-old can manage but a few words. They cannot report what they had to eat, when and how they were punished, whether they cried, were bored, or in other ways distressed. They cannot describe unhappiness or conflict, whether they were left alone, ignored, or exposed to likely danger. The parent must depend on often subtle cues--slight bruises, a depressed mien, unusual crankiness--to detect maltreatment or neglect. As we discussed

earlier, parents need a guide to what is good for babies as well as information with which to judge a given case.

Physical growth. Between birth and the age of 3, the height of the child doubles (almost 35 percent of total postnatal growth). The lymphoid tissues reach about 53 percent of adult mass and the brain gains 70 percent of its total growth (Tanner, 1962, cited in Tanner, 1970).

There is evidence that malnutrition in early childhood retards growth. If continued, it reduces adult size and is associated with physical, mental, and emotional retardation. Under extremely depriving institutional conditions, even when nourishing food is available, infants show alarming conditions of physical and mental retardation (Dennis, 1941; Spitz, 1946; Majorian, 1957; Goldfarb, 1945; Casler, 1961). The evidence suggests that the unavailability of nourishing food (protein, amino acids and tracer elements) retards growth, but that, in addition, emotionally stressful conditions may either depress the consumption of food or the body's ability to process food. Thus there is some evidence that malnutrition, whatever its basis, affects physical as well as neural growth. Two important conditions direct our attention to infancy. First, although children deprived of needed growth substances can catch-up when the condition is corrected, it is both the duration of the malnutrition and the magnitude of the normal rate of growth when malnutrition occurs, which determine whether full recovery is possible. Second, there is the question of sensitive period which, for the brain, might occur when growth is at a maximum and enzymes systems are rapidly multiplying. For the human infant, these possibilities are still somewhat

speculative (Tanner, 1970), although recent analyses provide evidence that the surmises might not be too far off the mark (Ricciuti, 1976). There are innumerable unresolved questions regarding an infants' minimal nutritional requirements and the environments in which such requirements are not met (cf Loehlin, Lindzey and Spuhler, 1975). Certainly, there is no evidence that child care environments, typically or occasionally, deprive infants of the stuff needed for physical growth. A case for concern cannot be based on evidence that many (or even a few) babies are in jeopardy, but, rather, on the absence of evidence regarding the likelihood of jeopardy. Given the wide diversity of licensed and unlicensed child care facilities (e.g. Kayserling, 1972), the issue merits attention.

Social and emotional development. One of the miracles of recent psychological research has been to elevate the infant from obscurity to prominence. Among the many areas of development to receive careful scrutiny, studies of social and emotional development have caused us to perceive the infant as a sublimely social human being, sensitively tuned-in to the socially created events around him. Although the infant does not seem to distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar until 3 or 4 months-of-age (Kessen, Haith & Salapatek, 1970), there is evidence that the baby begins to achieve synchrony with stable caregiving patterns shortly after birth (Sander, 1964; cf Schaffer, 1977, for a review of this literature).

The baby's first social smile is a major developmental milestone. It is accompanied by eye-to-eye contact, sustained attention, and, within that constellation of behaviors, the baby conveys to an attending caregiver

a message that says, "He knows me." Although the baby may not, in fact, be socially discriminating, facts do not matter much to the parent. Whatever the smile might mean to the baby, it adds an increment to the parent's attachment to the child (Bell, 1971).

Between 4 and 9 months-of-age, the baby becomes increasingly alert and responsive to the presence of persons--parents, familiar people and strangers. Toward the end of that period signs of separation anxiety appear. The baby becomes distressed when the parent leaves, which to many investigators indexes the child's psychological attachment to the parent (Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Ainsworth, 1962, 1969, 1973; Ainsworth & Wittig, 1967).

Our sketch of these phenomena has been too rough to fully capture the richness of the avilable literature. However, certain issues apply to the care of young children (Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973). The adult attachment figure is not necessarily exclusively the mother; fathers, grandmothers, and surrogate caregivers may also achieve this status. Separation from attachment figures is not necessarily harmful, although some conditions aggrevate the child's distress while other conditions alleviate it (cf Yarrow, 1964; Maccoby & Masters, 1970). The emerging consensus is that although multiple caregiving does not inhibit the child's ability to form close social ties, the ties are contingent upon stable relations maintained over time; typically, it is the mother who provides the continuity and for the most children becomes the central attachment figure in relation to which others are more peripheral. When the child must be separated from the mother (or other attached persons), the child functions best when given a prior chance to become familiar with the new

caregiver, when not too many new caregivers are involved, and when the new relation is stable and continuous.

Among the more alarming observations of children between 6 and 30 months in surrogate child-care settings is a constellation of behaviors somewhat similar to the malnutrition syndrome we discussed earlier although far less dramatic. The child weeps and frets when the parent leaves; he doesn't eat well and his sleep is restless; soon he begins to develop minor, low grade infections which eventually make it necessary to keep the child at home; the child eventually recovers, returns to the center, and the same cycle begins (Sjølund, 1973; Garnicki, 1964).

Not all children display such a syndrome; some children seem to have developed adequate coping systems, some mothers are skilled at helping the child master the transition from home to surrogate care, and some caregivers know how to reduce the turmoil of separation. A key issue, however, is the role of the parent--as judge of how and when the child should be left, as someone who feels confident in the child care arrangement and who conveys this confidence to the child, as a welcomed member of the child care endeavor whose concerns are respected.

We dwell on the attachment-separation issue because it has been a controversial one in the child care literature (cf. Blehar, 1974; Ricciuti, 1974). Of itself, the ample documentation of distress would cause concern. However, the problem may be important for reasons other than the presence of a short-term problem.

The effects of early social experiences. Evidence is accumulating that the quality of a child's early social relationships determine the child's subsequent competence. Several investigators have used the

concept of "secure attachment" as a variable which predicts later competence (Ainsworth, 1973). Other investigators have demonstrated that parental characteristics which facilitate secure attachment also facilitate later social and intellectual performance (Clarke-Stewart, 1973). With respect to mothers (fathers have not been as intensively studied), it is primarily their responsiveness to the infant, their capacity to provide warmth and social stimulation during the latter half of the first year which determines the social, intellectual, and verbal competence of their children during the second year (Clarke-Stewart, 1973; Kessen & Fein, 1975). Moreover, the form of parental input which optimizes development might change during the second year of life. Although the social environment is still the crucial delivery system, the mother's ability to supply the child with intellectually valuable experiences in addition to social stimulation seems to be crucial (White & Watts, 1973). Recent studies of the climate of surrogate child care institutions, caregiver behaviors, and child performance suggest that variables associated with maternal care might apply to surrogate care (Tizzard & Tizzard, 1974).

A thorough presentation of the extensive literature on the influence of parent behaviors upon the behavior and development of young children is beyond the scope of the present paper. Our purpose in summarizing the current status of the research was to support the argument that what happens to children during the early years seems to have an impact on later functioning and that research has yielded some of the information parents need to assess the quality of care being given to children. Of course we do not know the consequences of matches and mismatches between the caregiving characteristics of parents and surrogate caregivers. Research on infant day care suggests that enriched though costly programs

do not harm children, but it has been difficult to demonstrate positive gains (White, et al., 1973; Kagan, Kearsley and Zelazo, 1976).

Parent Participation and Infant Day Care

In the previous section we considered the physical vulnerability of the infant, the development of social attachments, and the influence of early experiences on the child's subsequent development. Relatively little is known about the impact of day care on several consequential aspects of infant development. And, not surprisingly, less is known about the way various aspects of parent participation modify this impact. Our discussion was intended to establish the following issues as a framework for assessing the implications of parent participation:

1. The infant is physically and emotionally vulnerable; special provisions must be made to monitor the child's well being when care is provided outside the home. Relatively little is known about the conditions in which infants receive care and the consequences of such conditions for infant growth and development.

2. Disruptions in the continuity of care are likely to be stressful for the child. Since parents are the most viable sources of continuity for the child, the interface between the family and the surrogate caregiver must be broad, the overlap extensive, and the transition between home and institution as smooth as possible.

3. Although it may be difficult for day care programs to enhance children's development when home conditions function to depress it, poorly formed child care arrangements might depress development when home conditions would function to enhance it. Most studies of infant day care stress the former rather than the latter.

4. Information regarding conditions which enhance children's development is available though not necessarily accessible to most parents. Access to such information is essential if parents are to function as wise and knowledgeable monitors of child care arrangements.

V. Parent Participation and Federal Requirements

Of all the problems posed by the prospect of Federal regulation, the issue of parental involvement is probably the least controversial in principle and the least costly in practice. Certainly, the rhetoric of politicians, religious leaders, and professionals seems to reflect a national consensus regarding the sanctity of the family and the urgency of strengthening the role of parents in the upbringing of children. The rhetoric seems to say that when there is a conflict of interest between the family and a secondary institution, the family must prevail.

The FIDCR, 1968

In some respects, the 1968 requirements for parent participation resemble earlier Head Start policies. They differ, however, in important ways, some of which reflect the lack of program focus and the administrative chaos typically associated with day care delivery systems. The requirements cover the following domans and forms of parent involvement:

1. Opportunities must be provided parents at times convenient to them to work with the program and, whenever possible, observe their children in the day care facility.
2. Parents must have the opportunity to become involved themselves in the making of decisions concerning the nature and operation of the day care facility.

3. Whenever an agency (i.e., an operating or an administering agency) provides day care for 40 or more children, there must be a policy advisory committee or its equivalent at that administrative level where most decisions are made. The committee membership should include not less than 50 percent parents or parent representatives, selected by the parents themselves in a democratic fashion. Other members should include representatives of professional organizations or individuals who have particular knowledge or skills in children's and family programs.

4. Policy advisory committees must perform productive functions, including, but not limited, to:

   a. Assisting in the development of the programs and approving applications for funding.

   b. Participating in the nomination and selection of the program director at the operating and/or administering level.

   c. Advising on the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.

   d. Initiating suggestions and ideas for program improvements.

   e. Serving as a channel for hearing complaints on the program.

   f. Assisting in organizing activities for parents.

   g. Assuming a degree of responsibility for communicating with parents and encouraging their participation in the program.

It should be noted that only the first section deals with the ongoing daily program. The expression "opportunities must be provided" essentially places control over the quality and quantity of parental contact in the hands of the day care facility--e.g. a facility would be in compliance if one day a month were set aside for parent observation or work in the program. Given day care field conditions in which facilities may discourage the presence of parents, the regulations support horizontal collaboration in the weakest possible form.

Part 2 of the requirements seems to have been written with the diversity

of day care facilities in mind. It is difficult to mandate a formal participation mechanism for a family day care situation which serves two families. In the absence of a strong statement regarding ongoing daily contact, the problem of ensuring that parents have accurate information about the facility and thus some basis for entry into decision-making activities (to either change policies or seek a new arrangement) is difficult to solve.

The last two parts of the requirements mandate formal parent participation on policy advisory committees "at that administrative level where most decisions are made." In the absence of well-formed administrative channels, the language of the requirements is unavoidably vague. With the demise of community action agencies, the vagueness is compounded--if it is possible to have more than one administering agency in a city, how will parents (or others participating on a advisory committee) make any contribution to the chronic problem of coordinating day care services? Although agencies which provide day care "for 40 or more children" do make significant policy decisions, decisions at a still higher level usually determine whether an "application for funding" is to be granted, as well as the criteria for application. As we noted earlier, by 1969 Head Start was beginning to distinguish levels of decision-making (e.g. center, delegate and grantee),* which was possible because the system for distributing funds and making decisions was already specified. In the absence of a clearly marked administrative hierarchy which channels funds from the Federal level to the local level, it is unlikely that the parent advisory committees described in the FIDCR will have the visibility and importance they must have if they are to represent the interests of consumers

*Head Start had an advisory committee at the national level although parents were not represented on it.

and citizens. It should also be noted that the resources needed to support advisory committees are not indicated and no attempt is made to connect advisory committees to state and local licensing agencies. Missing also is specific reference to a crucial "produetive function," that of budgeting. It is in the exposure to institutional budgets (in the case of day care, for both proprietory and non-proprietory centers) that it becomes possible to understand how children are actually being served.

Finally, the 1968 FIDCR statement retains the word "advisory" which was later dropped by Head Start. Again, if the purpose of parent participation is to reconnect the family and the institution and to underscore the principle of parent guardianship, something more than an advisory role with limited functions would be required. The implementation of parent participation provisions requires careful planning and administrative policies which provide practical support for parent efforts. Such support, although beyond the scope of the FIDCR, is essential to the effectiveness of the FIDCR.

Alternative I.

In the 1968 version of the FIDCR is less than adequate, what alternatives are possible? Our search for alternatives has been helped by access to a 1972 proposed draft revision of the FIDCR attached to the White, et al. (1973, Appendex IIc) review of federal programs for children. The structure of the proposed revision differs considerably from the 1968 FIDCR. First, the revision distinguishes between "operators," "administering agencies" and "in-home care." The requirements which apply specifically to each of these groups are then detailed. Parent participation receives far more attention here than it does in the

1968 document. For example, in discussing the relationship between administering agencies and operators, the proposed requirement would state:

> Day care operators retain a general responsibility for keeping caregivers and parents informed of the services available through, and the functions performed by, administering agencies . . . Day care operators are also responsible for encouraging parents to utilize such services . . .

The most crucial section (p. 16) of the requirements for operators poses the goal of "ensuring continuity with home and school." Toward that end, day care activities must "complement and supplement the child's experiences at home and in school" and "reflect respect and understanding of the parents' desires for the care and development of their children." Evidence of satisfactory compliance for preschool children would be provided by the following four practices:

1. At the time of the enrollment and thereafter as the need arises, the operator or other appropriate agent of the operator discusses with each parent the child's habits, activities and schedules while at home or in school and his parents' special concerns about his past and future behavior and development. His schedule and activities in day care are designed, to the extent possible, to complement and supplement his experiences at home and in school.

2. Parents are encouraged to visit the facility, observe, and participate in the care of their children. The operator is responsible for contacting parents to exchange information concerning the child.

3. Caregivers' and operators' concerns about the health, development or behavior of any child are communicated to the parent promptly and directly.

4. Each child's cultural and ethnic background and primary language or dialect is respected by his caregivers. Whenever possible, caregivers are able to speak and understand the primary language of each child.

The proposed revision goes considerably further than the limited "opportunity" injunction of the 1968 version. The revised document considers the accountability of operators with respect to their ability to relate effectively to parents and community. Evidence of compliance would consist of the operator's willingness to "inform parents and other interested persons about the goals, policies and content of the day care program . . ." Omitted is any reference to information regarding the financial side of the operation.

Also specified (p. 33) in the proposed revision are aspects of the admission procedure which strengthen the parent's role by ensuring parent access to information regarding mutual responsibilities. In addition to requiring a written record of basic family information, evidence of compliance is provided by:

1. The goals, policies and activities of the day care program are presented and explained to parents at the time of enrollment. Parents are counseled regarding the appropriateness of the day care facility for their child.

2. A clearly stated written procedure developed by the administering agency by which a parent may take grievances to that agency is presented and explained to each parent.

The question of ensuring parent participation at the operator level is discussed. The rule is "parents must be given the necessary information and opportunity to be involved in the policies, goals, and procedures of the day care programs in which their children are enrolled." Evidence of satisfactory compliance would consist of the following:

1. Each day care facility serving 15 or more children has a policy advisory council. At least 50% of the members of each policy advisory council must be parents of the children served.

2. The policy advisory council shall approve project grant applications for Federal operating funds before submission.

3. The policy advisory council shall periodically review the policies and practices of the day care facility to determine compliance with these requirements. Where discrepancies noted cannot be resolved between the parent policy advisory council and the operator, the remaining difficulties should be brought to the attention of the administering agency.

Section II of the proposed requirements is addressed to the administering agency. The administering agency is assigned responsibility for ensuring that facilities and programs comply with the requirements. Among other things, it must respond to the complaints of parents and policy advisory councils, see to it that the results of health evaluations are communicated to parents, and that information and assistance is given to parents in obtaining psychological and social services.

In view of the strong and detailed provisions made for parents at the operator level, the requirements for parent participation in decision-making at the administering agency level is strikingly limited. The criteria for compliance appear in two clip paragraphs:

1. Every administering agency has an advisory group which includes parents of children enrolled in day care.

2. Upon request, information is provided to parents on administering agency policies, practices, budgets and evaluations.

Surprisingly, the proportion of representation of parents is omitted, as is a detailed listing of decision-making areas with which the advisory "group" is to be concerned. In view of the attention paid earlier in the document to parent advice in decision-making areas, the diminution of the

parent role at the level of the administering agency (where decisions entail the distribution and allocation of funds) is puzzling. However, the "right to know" provision (which includes budget) is entirely consistent with the intentions of other sections and represents an important extension of the concept of parent participation. Presumably, the requirement refers only to the administering agency; left unclear throughout is access to the fiscal arrangements of the operating agencies (proprietory and non-proprietory). The requirements for in-home care are notably thin, reflecting perhaps the general lack of respect for in-home arrangements.

Although the proposed regulations address the question of transportation, they do not take into account the degree to which the transportation of children runs counter to the best interest of parent participation. Especially in the case of children under 3 years-of-age, group transportation might be inadvisable. In addition, since the FIDCR can be of enormous assistance to parents in monitoring the quality of a day care environment, some parts of the requirements might be more specific (e.g. rather than "nutritious" meals, the requirements might refer to a child's "minimum daily nutritional requirements in a palatable and appropriate form"). The most disconcerting part of the document is its omission of the 1968 requirement that parent representatives be "selected by parents themselves in a democratic manner."

In sum, it is our impression that the proposed revision strengthens the involvement of parents on the crucial level of ongoing, direct contact with a day care program. However, it weakens parent participation on higher levels of institutional decision-making. The difference may well represent the change in the climate of public opinion between 1968 and 1972, yet the singular importance of parent participation in day care

should transcend relatively short term political swings.

Alternative II.

The report of the early childhood development task force (1970) which examined the state of day care in New York City provides an informative illustration of a different, and, in some respects, more appealing way of structuring the participation and involvement of parents in decision-making functions.

The task force forthrightly endorsed the philosophy that mandates opportunities for parent involvement in every aspect of early childhood services. In accord with that spirit the task force recommended

> . . . the establishment of an Early Childhood Commission as a policy-making body for the Department of Early Childhood Services with the majority of its members being parents of children enrolled in programs funded by the Department.
>
> One-third parent representatives on the boards of existing sponsor agencies. For those agencies that sponsor other services in addition, a special committee for the early childhood program to be set up with a majority of parents.
>
> A majority of parent representatives on the boards of future sponsor agencies.
>
> Parent-controlled policy advisory committees for every publicly-funded early childhood center.

The Commission is assigned responsibility for establishing the policies of a city agency. It would consist of 21 members, the majority of whom are parents. It would be required to meet monthly, its members would serve two year terms and be paid on a per diem basis. Membership on the commission would be determined by the Mayor from a list submitted by

broadly representative organizations, city agencies, and political units.

Although the functions of the Commission are broad, access to fiscal information is not specified. However, one item missing from other proposals is included here--the need for financial resources in order to carry out the Commission's work. These funds would be used in part to engage consultants to help resolve policy dilemmas, although funds would also be needed for investigative and general support purposes.

According to the recommendations of the task force, the strongest parent involvement in policy would be at the city level. Advisory boards and parent committees would function at the agency level with representatives elected by persons who have children currently enrolled in the program.

Pick and Choose

In the present section we discussed the 1968 Federal requirements governing parent participation. In order to demonstrate that alternative formulations are possible, we presented two additional proposals. One, which dealt with regulations at a national level, was rich in detail regarding horizontal collaboration between parent and institution. Appropriate stress was placed upon the importance of the physical presence of well informed, engaged parents along with some detail as to how the presence of parents might be encouraged.

The second formulation, addressed to parent participation at a city level, displayed far more political astuteness. Behind the proposal seems to have been recognition that the connection between parents and social service establishments must occur at the highest level of governmental -

decision-making and that parent representation on such a body must involve broad segments of the parent community. As a genuine policy-making body, such a group gains status, respect and recognition.

The purpose of enhancing the prestige and influence of such a body is to increase the visibility of child care issues and problems. Hopefully, a visible policy body would engender debate and controversy stimulating enough to attract the attention of the community at large. In fact, a nation-wide election (with all persons with children under 6 years-of-age eligible to vote) based on proportional representation, although impractical to implement, might be the ideal way to present national issues to the public and arrive at child care policies which reflect parent diversity as well as consensus.

VI. Summary and Conclusions

In the present paper we addressed the issue of parent involvement with a special focus on the needs of children under 3 years-of-age. We did not argue that a special form of parent involvement was needed for infants; rather, that requirements for parent involvement must be strong and precise enough to guarantee that the needs of infants will be met. Parents are the essential ingredients of such a guarantee, with respect to their roles as legal and practical guardian, as consumer, and as citizen. Today, and for some time into the future, day care parents will constitute a broad segment of the American public, a constituency which crosses social class, race, and ethnicity.

In our discussion of the policy developed by Head Start, we indicated that although the purposes of the poverty program does not apply to day care, some forms of parent participation evolved by Head Start are appropriate for day care. Nor should the possibility that parent participation as such helps the development of children be dismissed too lightly. Although the first priority of day care is to protect the well-being of children, opportunities to optimize that development must be given serious consideration and pursued whenever possible.

In examining the 1968 statement of the FIDCR we felt that the section on parent participation failed to deal with the daily contacts between parent and caregiver in any great detail. Unfortunately, although much is known about the distressing and depressing effects of separation from

the parent, relatively little is known programmatically about how to alleviate these effects, or about the specific effects of parental presence and contact upon the child's ability to cope with the day care situation.

Parent participation at a decision-making level is essential if parents are to retain a central position in the childrearing enterprise. Parents may participate as "advisors" or as genuine policy-makers, and participation may be determined by self-selection, appointment or election. Their participation might be strong or weak, at high or low levels of decision-making and funds might be allocated to strengthen such participation. Ideally, at least one of the policy bodies designed for the participation of parents would have political visibility and would speak for a significant portion of the community which cares about the status of children. In a sense, parents are a special kind of citizen, charged by society with a very special task. It seems only fitting that regulatory provisions reflect the seriousness of that task.

Although Federal regulation is a highly sensitive issue, we believe that it is easier to justify in the area of parent participation than in many other areas covered by the FIDCR. Moreover, when the needs and vulnerability of young children are taken into account, we believe that the strongest, most explicit and specific statement is required.

In view of the foregoing, we make the following recommendations for what would constitute an optimal set of requirements concerning parent participation:

1. In view of the central importance of parents in the rearing of children, we recommend that opportunity for parent participation be a mandatory requirement for the use of Federal funds whether through

direct or indirect means of program support. Among other things, this would mean that adherence to the FIDCR would serve as a criteria for achieving tax exempt status and, possibly, as a source of extra tax credits for child care services.

2. In order to design viable participatory requirements funding channels must be reassessed; the administrative bodies to which policy bodies are attached must be redesigned so as to take into account direct and indirect sources of Federal funding, local licensing agencies and other local groups currently monitoring or supporting day care services. Ample funds must be allocated to permit parent policy bodies to function (e.g. funds for travel, support staff and consultants).

3.Parent participation at the day-to-day operating level must be ensured by every means possible ranging from the training of caregivers to the policies of facilities. An essential aspect of such a requirement is appropriate, accurate, and honest information; an "open door" to parents and the community.

4. Parent participation at the highest levels of decision-making must also be ensured. We recommend that a National Child Care Commission be established with membership determined by an elective process. The commission would work with an inter-agency body responsible for coordinating child care planning at the Federal level. Similar commissions would function at lower levels of decision-making (cf. the 1970 report of the New York City task force). The commissions would participate in monitoring and policy activities.

With respect to minimum requirements below which, we believe, children might be at risk, we recommend the following:

1. Opportunity for parent participation be a mandatory requirement in the direct use of Federal funds for child care services.

2. Some attempt be made to identify major disbursal points in the distribution of Federal funds so that "administering agencies" can be more precisely identified.

3. At the day-to-day operating level, our "optimum" recommendations are also our "minimum" recommendations.

4. The 1968 requirements for parent participation on decision-making bodies not be diluted.

5. Provisions be made for parent participation in an advisory capacity at a national level of decision-making.

It is evident from our summary of the literature regarding parent participation and infant development that our policy recommendations were drawn far more from social and political considerations than from firm findings in the field of child development. The assumption that some form of parent participation would to some degree and in some fashion increase parental proximity to surrogate child care establishments and that increased proximity would improve the quality of child care or ease the child's transition from home to institution, has never been directly assessed. Although the deficit of carefully collected data and analyses has perturbed several reviewers (cf. MIDCO, 1972; White, et al., 1973), our own search of projects currently funded by Federal agencies failed to locate any studies whose primary purpose was to examine the several ways in which parent involvement can occur and the influence of these upon children's development. Thus, at the present time we know that parent involvement increases when it is mandated. We also have reason to believe

that young children benefit when they attend programs which promote such involvement. How such policies would work in day care situations which service infants and how parent involvement yields benefits to children represent a series of questions as yet untouched by serious research. Our review suggests some themes around which to order future research efforts. A serious and sustained commitment to systematic study is required to refine Federal requirements and standards. Such study might cover the following areas:

1. The development of carefully evaluated program models for enhancing parent participation in the above modes. Such models would consider administrative mechanisms, staff training and support for parent committees or commissions.
2. The development of appropriate instruments for assessing the quality of parent participation and the effects on infants and young children.
3. National surveys of conditions in the field, especially with respect to the interface between child care programs, parents and early child development; small scale, process oriented studies are also required to provide insight to the dynamics of the interface.

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NOTE TO THE READER:

The interpretations and conclusions expressed in this paper are the author's and are not intended to represent this position or policy of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

It is being distributed to solicit comments and criticisms to assure technical soundness, the adequacy of supporting materials, relevance, and general comprehensibility. It is hoped that this paper and its review will contribute to the improvement of the public debate on social policy and the proper Federal role in regulating child day care.

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